

President George W. Bush's 2007 budget proposal includes more than \$9 million in budget cuts to the Beltsville Agricultural Research Center (BARC), including the closure of two BARC labs.

The labs scheduled to shut down include the fruit and phytonutrients labs, leaving 43 employees without jobs. Among the labs' projects was finding compounds in fruits and vegetables that can protect against cancer and heart disease and developing small fruit varieties that would improve fruit production traits.

The proposed budget will also give \$19.3 million to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Center for Weather and Climate Prediction in College Park. The new NOAA Center, which will house about 800 federal employees, scientists and contractors, will replace the National Weather Service's World Weather Center located in Camp Springs.

University of Maryland President C. Dan Mote Jr. said he was pleased with the budget increase.

"The National Center for Weather and Climate Prediction will add to the wealth of advantages and disciplines available through the university's research park," Mote said. The center's work, he said, would "have huge impacts on almost every aspect of life, science and the economy."

While U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-5th-Md.) of Maryland criticized Bush for the cuts to BARC's budget, he said he would ensure more funding for the Weather Center, which is scheduled to open in 2008.